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U.S. Says Lebanon Policy Is Unswerved by Killings

Ford and Kissinger Vow That Search for a Peaceful Solution Will Go On —Americans Won't Be Evacuated

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WASHINGTON, June 16—The United States said today that its efforts to help promote a political solution in Lebanon would continue despite the kidnapping and murders of Ambassador Francis E. Meloy Jr., his economic aide and his chauffeur-bodyguard in Beirut this morning.

"The goals of our policy must remain unchanged," President Ford said at the White House this afternoon. "The United States will not be deterred from its search for peace by these murders."

Evacuation of the 53 American officials remaining in Beirut and 1,400 other Americans had been considered, officials here said, but that move was rejected because it would seem that a terrorist act had determined American policy.

Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, in a statement of his own late in the day, said: "The President's statement expressed the shock and revulsion that all of us feel at this tragic, cowardly and senseless act."

"It also expresses our determination not to be deterred by brutal and vicious action from the search for peace," Mr. Kissinger said, "but, equally, no nation or group should believe that the United States will not find ways to protect its diplomatic personnel."

Release Was Expected

Mr. Meloy had been in Lebanon only a month. At the start of the working day here, officials knew that Mr. Meloy had disappeared and apparently had been abducted with Robert O. Waring, the Embassy's economic counselor, and Zohair Moghreh, the chauffeur-bodyguard, while on their way to visit President-elect Elias Sarkis. But most officials expected that the men would be released.

Mr. Ford, Mr. Kissinger, Brent Scowcroft, the President's Adviser for National Security, William P. Clements Jr., Deputy Secretary of Defense, and George Bush, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, were meeting at the White

House to discuss the situation shortly after noon when the word of the men's deaths was received.

Reports, Then Confirmation

Mr. Bush informed the President when the meeting began that these unidentified bodies had been found in Beirut. Shortly after 1 P.M. Terrence O'Donnell, an aide, passed to Mr. Kissinger a manila envelope containing a file card reporting that the bodies had been identified. A few minutes later another folder was delivered, with a map showing where the bodies had been found in Beirut.

Robert L. Funseth, the State Department spokesman, said later that officials of the Embassy in Beirut had reported that the International Committee of the Red Cross had informed them that three

unidentified bodies had been received at its hospital.

Lebanese employees of the embassy were sent to the hospital, which is in the western, Moslem-controlled part of Beirut, as the Embassy is. The employees made positive identification.

After next of kin had been notified—Mr. Meloy's brother, Daniel, in New York, and Mr. Waring's wife, who had been evacuated from Lebanon months ago with two of her four children to Athens—the White House and State Department announced that the three men were dead.

Evacuation Plans Reviewed

Contingency plans for evacuation were reviewed at the White House meeting. In recent months the Sixth Fleet has kept an aircraft carrier or helicopter-carrier and support ships in the Eastern Mediterranean, for evacuation work.

In addition, Pentagon officials said, in the last few days three Air Force C-130 transports and four helicopters were sent to a British air base on Cyprus in the event of an evac-

uation from Lebanon. The task force now in the Eastern Mediterranean is led by the helicopter carrier Guadacanal.

The mood here, however, was clearly not for evacuation. One participant in the White House meeting said the top officials were determined to increase whatever leverage the United States might have on parties and factions in Lebanon to resolve differences through negotiation.

Additional efforts will be made, it was said, to persuade Syria and other Arab states involved in Lebanon to reach an accord that will put into effect a political compromise reached in January that preserves Lebanon's Christian-Moslem political balance. But there was also a desire to express the frustration and anger that welled up over the killings.

Mr. Ford seemed grim as he read reporters his statement in the White House press-briefing area. This is the full text of the statement:

"The assassination of our Ambassador in Beirut, Francis E. Meloy Jr., of our counselor for economic affairs, Robert O. Waring, and of their driver, Zohair Moghreh, is an act of senseless, outrageous brutality. I extend to their families my own deep sense of sorrow and that of all the American people.

Living With Danger

"These men were on their way to meet with President-elect Sarkis. They were on a mission of peace, seeking to do what they could in the service of their country to help restore order, stability and reason to Lebanon. Their deaths add another tragedy to the suffering which the Lebanese people have endured beyond measure.

"These men had lived with danger for many weeks and did so with the dedication and

disregard of personal safety which we have come to expect of the Foreign Service.

"The goals of our policy must remain unchanged. The United States will not be deterred from its search for peace by these murders. I have instructed Secretary Kissinger to continue our intensive efforts in this direction.

"I will name a new Ambassador to Lebanon within the very near future to resume the mission Ambassador Meloy performed so brilliantly. I have also instructed the Secretary to get in touch with all of the governments in the area and with the Lebanese leaders to help identify the murderers and to see that they are brought to justice. I have also ordered that all appropriate resources of the United States undertake immediately to identify the persons or group responsible for this vicious act.

"Those responsible for these brutal assassinations must be brought to justice. At the same time, we must continue our policy of seeking a peaceful solution in Lebanon. That is the way we can best honor the lives to their country and for the cause of peace."

U.S. Seen Considering Brown

The President did not say who the new Ambassador would be, but officials said they expected a major effort would be made to persuade L. Dean Brown, a veteran Foreign Service trouble-shooter, to take the assignment. Mr. Brown recently returned from Lebanon, where he had served as a special envoy of Mr. Ford's to act as a middle man between the Lebanese factions.

Not unexpectedly, there was a considerable confusion over the precise circumstances of the deaths. Mr. Ford's call for Lebanese leaders and others to help identify the killers indi-